

her father Stanley Niemiec, both of Harwood Heights.

The Polish American Aero-Club is, by its own claim, the largest Polish flying club outside of Poland. Its approximately 60 members form a close-knit community of enthusiasts who fly both regular planes and gliders. Like the four members killed in the crash, many of the club's members came to the United States from Poland to seek new opportunities.

During this difficult time, Chicago's Polish American community continues to demonstrate strength and resilience as it celebrates the lives of the victims. About 1,000 mourners came together for a memorial service for the victims, held at St. Constance Catholic Church in Chicago, on February 1.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me tonight in remembering the six men and women who were killed in this tragic crash. I wish to express my sincere condolences to the families and all the friends of the victims. Our entire community has been diminished as a result of this tragedy. On behalf of all the residents of the Ninth District, I extend a hand of friendship and a heart filled with sorrow to all those who knew and loved them.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA BUDGET AUTONOMY ACT OF 2009

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 12, 2009

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, on February 3, 2009, I intended to introduce my budget autonomy bill. I submitted the following introductory statement for the RECORD on that day. It appears that the wrong bill was attached inadvertently. Today, I correct that mistake by introducing the District of Columbia Budget Autonomy Act of 2009.

As we approach a vote on the D.C. House Voting Rights Act of 2009, it is not too early in the session to begin the next steps necessary to make the residents of the District of Columbia genuinely free and equal citizens. Other than to voting rights, the highest priority for District of Columbia residents in the 111th Congress is their right to control the funds they themselves raise to support their city. Budget control is essential to the right to self-government. Therefore, today, I am introducing the District of Columbia Budget Autonomy Act of 2009 to give the District the right to enact its local budget without annual congressional oversight.

As a practical matter, permitting the city's budget to become law without coming to Congress would have multiple and immediate benefits for both the city and Congress. For the city, a timely budget means: eliminating the uncertainty of the congressional process that has a negative effect of the city's bond rating, which adds unnecessary interest costs for local taxpayers to pick up; significantly increasing the District's ability to make accurate revenue forecasts; and reducing the countless operational problems, large and small, that result because the city's budget cannot be implemented when enacted by the city. Of the many problems that would be eliminated, none is more important than aligning the school year with the typical state government July 1st

fiscal year, instead of the congressional fiscal year, which starts in October, after the school year has begun.

Leaving the local enactment to the District would bring benefits to Congress as well. The D.C. budget often has had to come to the floor repeatedly before it passes because of controversial attachments, often of interest only to a few members who use the D.C. appropriations to promote their pet ideological issues. Members then complain about the time and effort spent on the smallest appropriations that affect no other members. No budget autonomy bill can eliminate the possibility of riders because there are countless ways to attach riders, but our bill reduces the likelihood that unrelated riders will hold the city's local budget hostage and sometimes the appropriations process itself.

I am gratified that Congress itself has moved toward the position embodied in this bill. Congressional experience with the District's budget has matured, and neither party has made changes in recent years. At the same time, increasing recognition of the hardship and delays that the annual appropriations process causes has led Congress to begin freeing the city from the congressional appropriations network. In 2006, Congress approved the Mid-year Budget Autonomy bill, offering the first freedom from the federal appropriations process, the most important structural change for the city since passage of the Home Rule Act 36 years ago. As a result, the District can now spend its local funds all year without congressional approval instead of having to return mid-year to become a part of the federal supplemental appropriation in order to spend funds collected since the annual appropriations bill. Moreover, during the past few years, appropriators have responded to our concern about the hardships resulting from delays in enacting the D.C. appropriation. I appreciate our agreement that has allowed the local D.C. budget to be in the first continuing resolution, permitting the city, uniquely, to spend its local funds at the next year's level, even though the budgets for federal agencies are often delayed for months. This approach has ended the lengthy delay of the budget of a big city until an omnibus appropriations bill is filed, often months after October 1st.

There is no risk to the Congress passing the District of Columbia Budget Autonomy Act. By definition, Congress will retain jurisdiction over the District of Columbia under Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution because the District is not a state. Since, therefore, Congress could in any case make changes in the District's budget and laws at will, it is unnecessary to require a lengthy repetition of the District's budget process here. The redundancy of the congressional appropriations process is its most striking feature, considering that few if any changes in the budget itself are made.

The original Senate version of the Home Rule Act provided for budget autonomy, and 210 years of redundant processing of a local budget and delays occasioned by the extra layer of oversight offer conclusive evidence that the time is overdue to permit the city to enact its local budget, the single most important step the Congress could take to help the District manage the city.

Members of Congress were sent here to do the business of the Nation. They have no reason to be interested in or to become knowledgeable about the many complicated provi-

sions of the local budget of a single city. In good times and in bad, the House and Senate pass the District's budget as is. Our bill takes the Congress in the direction it is moving already based on its own experience. Congressional interference into one of the vital rights to self-government should end this year with enactment of the District of Columbia Budget Autonomy Act.

HONORING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF CHIRICAHUA APACHE LEADER GOYATHAY, ALSO KNOWN AS GERONIMO, ON THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS DEATH

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 12, 2009

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, as Democratic Chairman of the House Native American Caucus, it is my distinct honor to join my friend and colleague Congressman RAÚL GRIJALVA in support of H. Res. 132. This resolution honors the life and extraordinary bravery of Geronimo, the great Chiricahua Apache leader, and recognizes the 100th anniversary of his death on February 17, 2009, as a time of reflection and the commencement of healing for the Apache people.

Geronimo, a spiritual and intellectual leader, became recognized as a great military leader by his people because of his courage, determination, and skill. He led his people in a war as the Apache homeland was invaded by citizens and armies first of Mexico, and then the United States. While the Apache people were forcibly removed by the United States and interned at San Carlos, Arizona, Geronimo led some of his people out of captivity and evaded military forces for several years. Upon surrendering to the United States, Geronimo and other Apache prisoners were interned in military prisons in Florida, Alabama and Oklahoma, far from their homeland. Geronimo died on February 17, 1909, and was buried in a military cemetery at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

The Apache people continue to honor and hold sacred Geronimo's efforts to preserve their traditional way of life and to defend their homeland. While we cannot erase the deplorable history of Indian policy in the United States to terminate tribal nations and their culture, perhaps this resolution will bring about a healing among the Apache people and their children will look back at their history and be proud that the United States paid tribute to Geronimo, a great Apache warrior.

As the San Carlos Apache Tribe and other Apache tribes across the country gather on February 17, 2009, in San Carlos, Arizona to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Geronimo's death, I wish them Godspeed as they begin their journey of spiritual healing.

CELEBRATING ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S 200TH BIRTHDAY

HON. MARK STEVEN KIRK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 12, 2009

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, today I rise to celebrate the 200th birthday of our sixteenth